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Board of Supervisors

March 1991

DOCUMENTS UNIT

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PERSPECTIVES

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REFERENCE BOOK

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TOBACCO \$\$: How much has been generated in the state as a result of the 1989 Proposition which gave us a Cigarette and Tobacco Surtax Fund? Answer: \$329.1 million in FY '88-89; \$934.7 million in FY '89-90; and \$741.1 million in FY '90-91. The law provided that the funds go to local health programs. San Francisco received \$26 million the first year, \$18.5 million the second and is expected to get between \$16 and \$18.5 million in FY '90-91. A 7.9% decline in smoking in recent years has affected the revenue source. Counties are now being urged to support AB 99, which would reauthorize tobacco tax program spending prior to a June 30 sunset.

CONFERENCES: ABAG-"Solving the Local Fiscal Crisis", Friday March 15, S.F. Hyatt Regency, Embarcadero, 3-9 p.m. (464-7916). CSAC-State Legislative Conference, April 16-18, Sacramento.

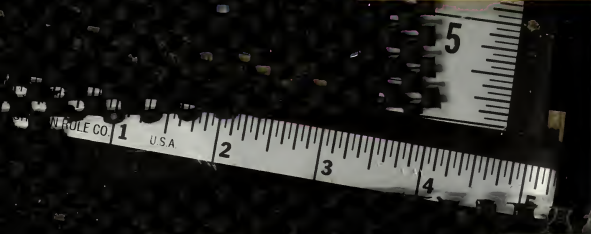
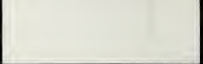
A TRILLION: The fiscal '92 federal budget, which begins Oct. 1, limits growth of federal spending to 2.6% but still tops a trillion dollars.

NO MEDICAL COVERAGE? Call 1 800 289-6574 to get details about the state's insurance pool designed to assist people without coverage. The Major Risk Medical Insurance Board has signed contracts with three insurers to cover 10,000 California residents who are unable to secure private coverage. The plan is designed for individuals not able to secure other insurance, those ineligible for employers health continuation benefits or those ineligible for Medicare. Premiums vary by plan selected, age and location. A 34-year old may pay between \$132.50 and \$164.50 in the Bay area depending on the plan selected. The state will cover the difference between subscribers' premiums and their health care claims using \$30 million from Tobacco Tax funds. There is an annual \$50,000 maximum benefit limit and \$500,000 lifetime limit. To date, approximately 2,400 people have signed up for the program.

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Contact Del Price 554-6661



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CRISIS: Cities vs. suburbs--Hartford and New Haven Connecticut are exploring commuter taxes to fill city coffers. A one percent commuter tax is under consideration in Hartford. At the same time, Connecticut Governor Weicker is proposing a state income tax. The new 6% income tax is designed to fill in a \$2.4 billion budget gap and is coupled with a reduction in the existing state sales tax from 8% to 4.25%.

CENSUS: Adjust or not adjust? The Census Bureau will soon decide if it has missed enough people in its initial 1990 count that an adjustment of that count is warranted. Proponents of adjustment argue urban areas would benefit from adjustment because there are many pockets of residents who might otherwise be missed. The adjustment would be made on the basis of a post-census survey of certain targeted areas. A decision must be made by July 15 under terms of a partial court settlement in a case brought by MALDEF on behalf of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Metropolitan Dade County, the National League of Cities, NAACP, LULAC and others.

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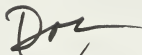
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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dowlin', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kenneth E. Dowlin
City Librarian

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PRODUCTIVITY UP, SICK LEAVE DOWN: Sick leave usage has dropped 14% in the Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Works where a 4-day, 40-hour work week is underway in a pilot program initiated last fall by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. They hope to reduce auto emissions and avoid Air Quality Management District fines. Early results show overtime is also down (saving \$160,000). At the same time, productivity increased nine percent in the first quarter of operations for the program. The Department has closed its 1,600-person headquarters building on Fridays and maintains operations through a "Friday Help Desk" staffed by a few key staffers. Customer and employee surveys are showing a high degree of satisfaction with the program.

\$10 BILLION: The Board of Supervisors in Los Angeles County controls a \$10 billion budget and serves 8.8 million people, including 3 million Hispanic residents. Many of these residents are now in the district redrawn last year after court challenge to a plan that would have diluted Hispanic representation. Former Assemblywoman Gloria Molina has since filled the seat.

POLITICS OF INCLUSION: Only half of all eligible voters cast ballots in the 1988 presidential election, the lowest turnout in half a century. Local turnout runs lower. According to the National League of Cities, registration is off in households with lower income and in big cities. To counter this trend, twenty five states have laws mandating agency-based registration, generally through motor vehicle agencies, and legislation is pending in the U.S. Congress. More than 75 million Americans would be registered as a result of this bill.

In San Francisco, 409,163 residents are registered. Last fall, 44% of those registered voted at the polls; another 13% voted absentee for a total of 57%.

WORK SHARE SAVES JOBS and \$\$: Pioneered in California, work share programs are now saving jobs and money across the country. An alternative to layoffs, work share allows for the payment of unemployment benefits to persons whose wages and hours have been reduced. Highest usage in California was in 1985-86 when 2,767 plans covering 216,000 employees were in place. While private sector employees have participated the most in the program, it was initially designed as a response to anticipated public sector cutbacks resulting from Prop 13. How does it work? Employers facing reductions in production, service or other conditions apply to the state. To be eligible, at least 10% of a workforce or unit must be affected by a reduction in wages and hours worked AND the reduction in wages and hours worked must also be at least 10%. Once approved, the employer issues certificates to employees with instructions on how to report to local unemployment offices. An approved work share plan lasts 6 months. If collective bargaining agreements cover affected employees, each union's bargaining agent must concur with the employer's application to the state. Typically, an employer continues to pay an employee for certain days worked (example: 4 days instead of 5) and the state makes up a portion of the difference (part of the 5th day's pay). Who benefits? New York State estimates it has saved more than \$5 million in unemployment benefits since it began a shared-work program five years ago. Employers maintain trained workers who would otherwise be laid off and employees keep their jobs.

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AIDS: Although black and hispanic women constitute 19% of all U.S. women, they represent 72% of U.S. women with AIDS.

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CHILDREN'S AMENDMENT. Petitions are being circulated now which would place on the November ballot an amendment to the City's Charter creating a "San Francisco Children's Fund." The measure sets aside a specific portion of property taxes for ten years (1 1/4 cents per \$100 of assessed value in the first year; 2 1/2 cents in succeeding years) approximately \$11 million annually. Reductions in this funding would be prohibited. If it passes, the Mayor and Board will then have to identify where to make budget cuts or revenue increases. A second petition drive is underway to create a Department of Children, Youth and Families. Funding would be based on the total for all such services in FY '91.

RECESSION HITS HOME: San Francisco's general assistance caseload grew 14% in the first quarter of 1991, which is below the Bay area average of 18%. Nevertheless, the program faces a \$4-\$4.3 million deficit for this current fiscal year.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Economist Robert Reich says that last year, Americans with incomes under \$10,000 gave 5.5% to charity or a religious organization while those with incomes over \$100,000 gave 2%.

SANTA BARBARA RECYCLES....TOILETS? Toilets "work as well as any rock base" according to the Santa Barbara County materials engineer responsible for putting 14 tons of them in the road. It seems the toilets were taking up landfill until the county decided to pulverize them and mix the particles with crushed rock that usually underlies asphalt roads. The overflow of toilets at the county dump occurred after a rebate program went into effect on the replacement of high water using toilets with low flush versions.

FEDERAL SHARE: During the late 1970s, federal grants made up 25% of state and local spending, today that share is 17%.

SPUR: REGIONAL PLANS FALL SHORT. According to the April SPUR REPORT, regional government recommendations of Bay Vision 2020 and Speaker Willie Brown's AB 3 both "fall short of requirements and criteria for effective and politically viable regional governance." SPUR says that regional plans must be based on political consensus and provide for the election of those agencies or commissions charged with regional governance. Bay Vision 2020 includes local government representatives in its appointed regional body. AB 3 permits the appointment of a State Commission which oversees seven locally elected ones. SPUR calls for all regional plans to be placed before voters through a referendum.

STATES: Only nineteen state legislatures throughout the country are scheduled to meet beyond May this year. Kentucky's State Legislature has not scheduled a regular session at all for 1991.

REPORT CARD: Credit ratings by New York companies are essentially report cards. "A rating merely gives a quick indication of the risk of purchasing a particular debt obligation," one ratings manager says, adding "that quick indication, however, is based on intensive research". Rating companies such as Moody's and Standard and Poor's look at debt factors (debt history, burden), economic factors (area economy, tax structure), fiscal factors (spending vs. budget) and administrative factors (inter-governmental and labor-management relationships). American City and County reports that Philadelphia is the first major city to be downgraded in a decade while New York City is successful despite a "faltering national economy, eroding revenues, rising costs and dwindling federal help." According to one Moody's manager, a rating is "not a reflection of the magnitude of the problems municipalities face, but of how well they deal with them." San Francisco's bond rating is a healthy AA.

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